

LABOUR MONTHLY

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Editor : R. Palme Dutt

The Outlook for 1954 * R.P.D.

**Unity and the
Italian Socialist Party** * Pietro Nenni

**A Common Policy
for Labour** * Harry Pollitt

Wages: the Next Step * J. R. Scott

**The Real Terrorists
in Kenya** * Monica Whately

**Bias in
Political Economy** * R. L. Meek

January, 1954

One shilling and sixpence

INTO NEW HANDS



ON MY DESK lies a letter telling me of the death of an old friend, for many years a member of the national Executive Council of the Amalgamated Engineering Union. His son writes: 'As my father and I have both been life-long readers, I think it would be his wish to express our appreciation of its sterling service to us both over many years'. This letter has a very special meaning for me, and it is linked with 'WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR LABOUR UNITY' (pages 24 and 25). For this letter and the Editorial Board message to you started trains of thought which led me back a good many years to my home town in the West Country; to where I saw my first copy of LABOUR MONTHLY, and who put it into my hands. It called up a vivid picture of a small spare man, head a little tilted back, a sharp-eyed steady look. Behind him tightly packed bookshelves; and on them a long line of much - handled buff - coloured magazines. (Written especially for engineers perhaps?—too difficult for me?) A few weeks later I saw the same magazine again, this time stacked on the window-ledge of the home of a South Wales miner. (Written especially for miners, perhaps?) These two men had something in common: they knew so much; they would explain difficulties so patiently and clearly; they seemed to have the same method of getting the hang of any problem. I had a very high regard for each. An engineer and a miner, but their true description, I learnt, should be put

down as Marxist. One of the tools they both used was that buff-coloured magazine. And so L.M. was put into yet one more pair of new hands. We are all of us heirs and debtors to valiant fighters.

For those readers who will be thinking over the Board's message and asking themselves: 'Just exactly how shall I start on it?' it may be helpful to have examples of what others have done and are doing; one of these caps may fit.

The Old Guard Musters

BEFORE the Labour Party conference at Margate, a group of Old Guard readers got together, and decided that one of our pre-conference numbers was just the key to open the door for the labour movement in their town. So they saw that it was put into the hands of 24 people prominent in working-class organisations there. Results: a trade union branch held a live debate on the main article and instructed their delegate to the constituency Labour Party to press for an amendment to *Challenge to Britain* (duly carried); a shop steward at a big factory was won as a new reader—and discussions began to go on inside about the issues before conference; several Labour Party councillors took to reading L.M. regularly, and some themselves began to ask us to send specimen copies to their friends in this South-East London borough.

The Old Guard didn't keep L.M. to themselves; they put it in new hands.

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Notes of the Month

Outlook for 1954

'Since Alfred Nobel died in 1896, we have entered an age of storm and tragedy. . . . The fearful question confronts us: have our problems got beyond our control? Undoubtedly we are passing through a phase where this may be so.'

**Sir Winston Churchill, Message in response to the
award of the Nobel Prize, December 10, 1953.**

THIS is not the first time that Sir Winston Churchill has deplored the twentieth century and viewed the future with dark foreboding. Indeed, this theme of 'the terrible twentieth century' has been his favourite theme ever since the victory of the peoples over fascism, and especially since the victory of the Chinese revolution has completed the emergence of one third of humanity

from imperialist servitude. Nor is he alone in this outlook. Pessimism has become obligatory in all upper-class literature of the Western capitalist world, and is echoed in the current outpourings of the representatives of social democracy (Leonard Woolf, the New Fabians, the vogue of Orwell, etc.). But this fashionable pessimism is no more a safe guide to the future than the previous equally shallow optimistic assumptions of the nineteenth century capitalist class of their own eternal success and expansion. It is not even necessarily a guide to the immediate short-term outlook for 1954 or the next few years—however critical the dangers undoubtedly are, and however severe the ordeals and savage the horrors which imperialism is already letting loose and may further let loose before mankind finally emerges into the freedom and sunlight of communism. The conventional rhetorical self-dramatising pessimism is only the customary expression of a class that is dying and that has become conscious of the close approaching downfall of its system. Optimism for them would be out of place.

‘Bright Beam’ of Dynamite

But the full irony of Sir Winston Churchill’s latest exercise in his familiar theme of gloom and doom—adorned with all the conventional rhetorician’s trappings of erudite references from his early Harrovian studies to ‘the downfall of the Roman Empire’ and kindred topics—needs to be appreciated in its context. For Sir Winston was offering his message for a gathering in Stockholm under the auspices of the Nobel Committee in response to the award of a Nobel Prize. With his unfailing sense of appropriateness for the occasion he advanced from the general to the particular. Against the ‘dark background’ of the ‘storm and tragedy’ of the twentieth century he discerned one ‘bright and enduring beam of culture’ in the legacy of Alfred Bernhard Nobel—who amassed his fortune from the manufacture of dynamite and the exploitation of the Baku oilfields.

Apostles of the Atom Bomb

From dynamite to the atom bomb is only a step. The gigantic new sources of power released by science through the invention of dynamite and the discovery of the means of harnessing atomic energy have opened to mankind limitless new possibilities of creative development. But they have been used by the imperialist governments mainly for the purposes of destruction. The barbarities and

horrors of the twentieth century era of the dying convulsions of imperialism are known to all. But the prophets of doom fail to place their finger on the source of the horrors. Who let loose the first imperialist world war? Who let loose fascism and nazism to advance on their career of aggression to the second world war? Who devised the criminal strategy of mass bombing of civilian populations? Who perpetrated—and are today still perpetrating—every bestiality against the colonial peoples, only for these same methods eventually to recoil also upon the peoples of Europe? Who dropped the first atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (with such consciousness of guilt that the Anglo-American leaders who gave the orders, at the very same moment as they were meeting Stalin at Potsdam, kept the decision separate and dared not inform Stalin what they intended)? Who dropped those atom bombs, not to speed the end of the war with Japan, but at the very same moment as the Japanese Government, faced with the power of the Soviet intervention, was already suing for peace, and therefore, as has since had to be recognised from all the evidence, not for the aim of accelerating the end of the war with Japan, but as the first shot for the third world war, to demonstrate American destructive power for the aims of world domination in the post-war era? It is no contradiction that the apostles of gloom, of the ‘storm and tragedy’ of the twentieth century should be at the same time the apostles of the atom bomb as the symbol and ‘shield’ and ‘saviour’ of their ‘Western civilisation’.

President Eisenhower’s Atomic War Plans

Hence it is only the continuation and culmination of a previous long and grim record that the outstanding signpost from the capitalist world on the eve of 1954 should have been President Eisenhower’s speech at the United Nations Assembly on December 8, openly proclaiming the United States’ decision to regard henceforth atomic weapons as ‘conventional’, *i.e.*, as normal and permissible.

‘Atomic weapons have virtually achieved conventional status within our armed services.’

This declaration should be inscribed in letters of fire over the desk of every editor who is preparing to write the customary turgid editorials about the dread menace overhanging humanity, the awful choice and all the rest of the deadwood phrases. It constitutes a landmark comparable to Hiroshima. No wonder Eisenhower took

months to gird himself up to make this speech. Vanished is the eight years pretence of the United States professing to desire to ban atomic weapons (under cover of the hypocritical 'plan' of the old financier Baruch, which was never a plan to ban atomic weapons, but only to secure a United States monopoly in them), accompanied by the regular vetoing every year of every Soviet proposal to ban them.

The Beast is Loose

It is characteristic that this grim proclamation of American atomic war strategy should have been buried like a dog's bone in a speech of empty platitudes about peace, and should have been smuggled in, as it were, in a single passing phrase under the smoke-screen of a nebulous plan for an 'atomic pool' under American control to get a grip on the atomic materials resources of the Soviet Union and other countries without raising any question of banning atomic weapons. And it is equally characteristic that the hosannah paean of comments of the servile press and politicians of the American satellite world should have ecstatically concentrated on the smokescreen, and elaborately missed the kernel of the speech. Official warning has now been served upon the world. The farce of eight years of deception is over. The beast is loose. It will be for the peoples of every country, including of the United States, to see that its power is suitably restrained before it does a mischief to the world.

Eisenhower's Black Record

President Eisenhower has a record on this matter of the atom bomb and similar weapons. Just as President Truman in 1949 declared that he 'would not hesitate to use the atom bomb if it were necessary for the welfare of the United States' (*The Times*, April 8, 1949), so Eisenhower made his position equally clear in 1951. Faced with the universal popular support for the demand of the World Peace Movement, embodied in the Stockholm Peace Petition, calling on every Government to undertake that it would not use the atom bomb first, General Eisenhower expressed his viewpoint in evidence to the Senate Foreign Affairs and Armed Services Committees on March 11, 1951. He declared that 'he was concerned at the apparently growing opinion that the United States should never drop the atom bomb first', and continued:

To my mind the use of the atom bomb would be on this basis. Does it advantage me or does it not when I get into war? If I felt the material destruction I was going to accomplish was not equal to some moral or great reaction the other way, then I would abstain. If I thought the net advantage to be on my side, I would use it instantly.

A typical gangster's calculation. Would I commit murder? Not if I thought I was going to get copped. But if I thought I could get away with it, and 'the net advantage would be on my side'—certainly. Sweet voice of 'Western civilisation' with the moral blessing of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Slump or Suicide

Why is the beast so wild, at the very moment when the hopes of humanity are turned to the flickering prospect of negotiation and the eager desire for a relief of international tension? The two aspects of the present world situation are not contradictory. They are two sides of one medal. The war danger increases, not merely at the same moment as, but precisely because the movement for peace is rising in strength. The capitalist camp, especially in the United States, is haunted by the fear of a prospective economic slump, and of the possibility of its onset in 1954. Nor are the signs lacking. Every financial newspaper, especially in the United States, discusses them. The articles of Colin Clark in the *Manchester Guardian* have set out some of the signals. Even the complacent *Economist* (November 28) has had to admit that 'there is no evidence that the trade cycle has been conquered once and for all' and to register the 'common belief that the recession will come in 1954 and its likely magnitude is expressed in America as a five to ten per cent. drop in industrial production'. The Korean war boom is over. Rearmament has been stretched to the limit of straining and disorganising the economic structure, rather than delivering the supposed shot in the arm. The battle for markets grows intense. The Western European countries strain against the limits and burdens placed upon them by American policy. To the desperate war camp, as in the moment of the unloosing of the Korean War in 1950, only now at an even higher level, peace appears as a spectre—war as a release.

Socialist Economic Superiority

At the same time the American financiers and militarists are compelled to recognise the unparalleled and accelerating advance of socialist economy in the Soviet Union and of productive levels

in all the countries of people's democracy. They are compelled to recognise the significance of the continuous rise in living standards, reductions of all prices, concentration on expanding still further the production of all consumption goods, and conversion of factories previously producing war equipment to peaceful purposes—in every feature, the exact reverse of the Western capitalist economy. Already by 1952 even *The Times* through its thickly blinkered spectacles was having to admit, after its correspondent had visited Moscow:

The standard of living here has improved since the end of the war out of all recognition and is higher than in some Western European countries.

(*The Times*, April 14, 1953.)

By the beginning of 1953 Adlai Stevenson was reporting the results of his world tour:

Recently Adlai Stevenson made the startling statement that the rate of increase in productivity within the Communist orbit was twice as great as that in the Western orbit.

(*Christian Science Monitor*, March 9, 1953.)

By the completion of the first half of 1953 the Bulletin of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe was reporting:

An approximate calculation shows that consumers (in the Soviet Union) will have some 15 per cent. more purchasing power available this year than last year.

15 per cent.—note well, engineers and railwaymen—not to meet the rise in the cost of living, but net increase in the standard of living. By the end of 1953 *The Times* and *Manchester Guardian* were furiously attacking the Secretary and technical staff of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for recording the further improvements in the standards of living of the countries of Eastern Europe, including the German Democratic Republic. When you don't like the weather, blame the barometer.

Spectre of Peace

A spectre is indeed haunting the American multi-millionaires and their Western European associates—the spectre of peace. For they know that these are no temporary transient trends and contrasts. These are basic divergent trends, and the contrast continues to accelerate. Given an era of peace, they realise where these divergent lines will lead. They can see the dread moment drawing into view when socialist productivity per head, despite all the initial handicaps of backwardness and destruction in the territories taken over, will have absolutely outstripped the highest levels of capitalist produc-

tivity in the most advanced industrial countries, and when the issue of the economic future of the world will have been settled by tangible results and standards no longer capable of dispute even by the dullest. They fear, not merely the absolute present achievement of socialist economy and production, but the staggering potentialities revealed in the increasing superiority, which they are now beginning to recognise publicly, of socialist scientific and technical levels, made possible on the foundations of a new society, of new human beings, and of a range of higher education which has outstripped the level of provision in the most advanced capitalist countries. This is what has given rise to the new warning note on the advancing strength of Soviet science sounded by the Chairman of the Congress Joint Atomic Energy Committee in October, 1953, and discussed in last month's article by Professor Bernal on 'The Answer to the Hydrogen Bomb'. They know now, not merely that they can no longer attempt to claim monopoly in atomic or hydrogen weapons, and would therefore use them at their peril, but that, while they have been concentrating on the bombs, the Soviet Union has outstripped them in the peaceful use of atomic energy. Hence the new concern with this question in Eisenhower's speech, and the transparent desire to get an American-controlled grip on Soviet atomic advances.

Negotiation or War

Peace or War—either alternative presents the leaders of capitalism with problems which they have lost confidence in their ability to solve. They fear peace and they tremble before the prospect of war. No wonder that, in face of the deepening economic contrast between the capitalist world and the socialist world, many of the most influential leaders in the United States fear peace even more than they tremble before the prospect of war. No wonder that some of the most reckless itch to use their stock of atom bombs and hydrogen bombs sooner rather than later, before the development has gone further, even if it were to mean going down in a mutual destruction. 'Better risk a war of possible annihilation', in the words of Eisenhower in March, 1950, 'than grasp a peace which would be the certain extinction of free man's ideas and ideals' (*i.e.*, of the freedom to exploit). The emergence of McCarthyism at this stage, no longer as a secondary sensational nuisance, but as a major political phenomenon in the United States springs from the present situation, just as Hitlerism leaped forward from the conditions of the onset of slump and of a bankrupt society staggering towards war.

A Fateful Choice

The choice is still open. We should not under-estimate the progressive forces in the United States which are fighting courageously under heavy and difficult conditions. The true voice of the American people was shown in the latest Gallup poll, which revealed 79 per cent. demanding an immediate unconditional meeting of Eisenhower, Churchill and Malenkov 'to try to settle world differences', as against only 12 per cent. opposing—the exact reverse of the policy of their rulers or of the clamour of their unrepresentative press. Above all, the universal and increasing revolt of all the nations tied to the American war chariot, compelling some limited reflection in the voices of their rulers, gives pause to even the most reckless American war strategists. This unstable balance of forces finds expression in the present uncertainties of the international diplomatic situation. The American rulers, while pressing forward their war plans, are compelled to take account of the universal demand for negotiation. But they still endeavour to obstruct genuine negotiations by every means in their power. They seek to pose, not peace aims, but the most extreme war aims, the aims of a hypothetical victorious world war (destruction of the people's democracies, etc.) as irrevocable prior conditions binding the Western powers in advance of negotiations. They demand the acceleration of the most aggressive war plans, to turn the scales for war, before negotiations can begin.

Bermuda and Berlin

The Bermuda Conference of the Western powers and the projected Four Power conference of the Foreign Ministers in Berlin in Germany reflect this situation. The Bermuda Conference was intended by American diplomacy to scotch the moves for negotiation, impose the American ultimatum terms on Britain and France, and coerce a reluctant France into accepting Nazi rearmament. But the Soviet Note proposing the Berlin Conference transformed the agenda of Bermuda. The Bermuda Conference was compelled in form to accept the proposal for negotiation; and this became the only visible concrete outcome. But the Bermuda Declaration sought to hedge round the nominal acceptance of negotiation on Germany with such terms as to make it meaningless. The Bermuda Declaration embodied the most aggressive American war aims, including Nazi rearmament and the incorporation of a remilitarised Western Germany in the American-controlled Western military

coalition, as well as the ultimate aim of the overthrow of the people's regimes in Eastern Europe, as indispensable prior fixed formulas to tie down the three Western powers before entering into discussions with the Soviet Union. This would be equivalent to an endeavour to rule out from consideration the solution of a united, peaceful democratic Germany. It would be equivalent to agreeing to a conference on Germany provided the main controversial issue on Germany is excluded as not subject to negotiation. 'I am always ready to discuss provided you agree to my terms'. It is much as if a physician, after having been repeatedly pressed by his patient's relatives to agree to a consultation, at last grudgingly agrees to the consultation, provided he can kill the patient first.

Not the Last Word

Bermuda, however, is not the last word. Theoretically, logically, strictly interpreted, the Bermuda Declaration excludes negotiation on Germany, and thus seeks to kill any Berlin Conference stone dead before it meets. But the very concern of the American diplomats to tie down Britain and France in writing to such ultimatum terms beforehand, and to bolt and bar the door against any genuine negotiation, betrays their anxiety lest Britain and France may try to escape from the net. Even the Bermuda Declaration was compelled to record in cryptic terms the dissenting voice of France: 'The French Minister for Foreign Affairs explained the problems facing his Government in regard to the European Defence Community'. The overwhelming subsequent outcry in France denouncing Bermuda has abundantly demonstrated that the fight is not finished. The Bermuda proposal to fix the date of the projected Berlin Conference for January 4 revealed the desire to fix the date in advance at such a time as to find France in the throes of a governmental transition and therefore unable to speak with an authoritative voice through its representative.

France Will Rise Again

But France, however weakened and humiliated under its present unrepresentative pro-American rulers, still holds strong cards to play. Adenauer may journey to Paris immediately after Bermuda to lecture France like a conqueror and issue his orders. Dulles may hasten to Paris to hurl his threats. But the visit of Daladier and the parliamentary delegation of nine to Warsaw to renew the ancient Franco-Polish friendship and re-affirm adher-

ence to the Oder-Niesse frontier of peace is a signpost for the future. The interests of France lie entirely with her old allies, with the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, with all the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe, with the mass of the German people, against any revival of German militarism and aggression by the old American monopolist partners of Thyssen and Krupp. The battle of the French people has not ended. It is only beginning. And the interests of the British people are entirely united in this fight with those of the French people.

Where Stands Britain?

But where does Britain's policy stand in this vital fight against a third resurgence of German militarism and aggression, which would mean war in Europe and a new world war? Is the deadly Munichite betrayal to be repeated? What right has Britain to try to hound France into the prison-house of E.D.C. under American-Nazi control, while herself ostentatiously keeping out? What was Britain's rôle at Bermuda? What was Churchill's rôle? What has happened to the May initiative of Churchill and Attlee? Did Britain willingly agree to the American aggressive ultimatum terms? Has British policy become the vassal of an Adenauer and a Dulles? Was the delegation tied by the Salisbury-Butler-Eden majority in the Tory Cabinet? Did Churchill seek to bargain capitulation in return for a deal on atomic energy, Middle Eastern oil and the Canal base, or economic-financial policy? To these questions the forthcoming foreign affairs debate in parliament, due to be held on December 17, may provide little answer; for the voice of popular opposition has been muffled and gagged in the British parliament; and the British parliament has in practice none of the powers of the French parliament to overthrow and change Governments or compel them to bow to its will. But the fight of the British people goes forward and will go forward. The deepening division of British and American interests cannot be so easily concealed. The interests of the British people are entirely opposed to the revival and rearming of German Nazism and militarism. They are entirely opposed to the American plans for a new aggressive war in Europe against socialism and people's democracy—a war which would use Britain as an atomic base marked for destruction. The interests of the British people are indissolubly linked with those of the French people, of the Soviet Union and of the Chinese People's Republic against the American war plans and for peace.

Labour's Opportunity—and Shame

Never had Labour such a golden opportunity to speak for Britain and to rally the entire nation against the surrender to American war plans, the rearming of German militarism, the shameful colonial wars of Lyttelton and the worsening of the conditions of the people in consequence of this policy of economic and political ruin. Even the Tory ranks are thrown into confusion and rent with divisions. But it must be added that, so far as the Front Bench leadership is concerned, official Labour was never so sunk in shame, in servility to Toryism and in surrender of the fight. The capitalist press publicly laughs at the feebleness and lack of militancy of Labour's parliamentary 'fight' against the Rents Bill. Tory Ministers sneer at the hopeless confusion and vacillation of the 'Opposition' dithering whether or not to censure the infamous colonial policy of Lyttelton. Lyttelton himself is able triumphantly to quote Griffiths or Attlee in defence of his armed overthrow of democratically elected Ministers in Guiana or heavy bombing in Kenya. The battle of six million organised workers for higher wages is ignored, disowned or even directly opposed by the very leaders who owe their positions to those same organised workers. The *Daily Herald* comes out on December 2 with a shameful article on its front page against the official action of the Confederation, representing three million members of the Trades Union Congress. A matter more worthy of the attention of the General Council than to complain of every pinprick in the *Tribune*.

'Dead from the Neck Up'

An acute foreign observer (not from any of the countries of socialism or popular democracy) remarked the other day on the peculiar impasse of British politics at the present moment. Toryism is heavily discredited and vulnerable. But official Labour is at present incapable of taking advantage of the opportunity (as the extremely small swing so far in by-elections indicates), because, as he remarked—with the customary delight of the foreigner in displaying mastery of the popular idiom—official Labour is 'dead from the neck up'. In this case a singularly apposite use of the popular idiom. For the limbs and body of Labour are at this moment showing remarkable energy and vitality—of abundant good augury for the future. It is only the top above the neck—as displayed on the parliamentary Front Bench and in the General Council—that is

proving a painful deadweight and liability, incapable of fighting, and only secreting poisons to pass on into the body and limbs to throttle their vitality.

McCarthy Disciple or Master?

In his article in the American quarterly review *Foreign Affairs* Mr. Attlee complains that McCarthy is stealing a Labour Party patent and is only a 'beginner at fighting Communism':

We are pardonably annoyed at being instructed by a beginner like McCarthy. The British Labour Party has had nearly forty years of fighting Communism in Britain.

This is an interesting and instructive sidelight on the outlook of the dominant Labour Party leadership. Mr. Attlee appears to regard McCarthy as an upstart rival firm invading his own line of business. He claims that he was there first. He could have added that Hitler was there before McCarthy. He could even have added that Bismarck, Stolypin, Cavaignac, not to mention Metternich and countless others were all busy fighting Communism, some of them long before Mr. Attlee or the Labour Party were born or thought of. But his date is interesting. 'Nearly forty years'. Why not 'nearly fifty years'—when Mr. Attlee was still a Tory? But 'nearly forty years'. There was no Communist Party in Britain forty years ago or indeed elsewhere. There was the Russian Bolshevik Party; but the pre-1914 relations of the Labour Party with the Bolshevik Party included financial aid transmitted through MacDonald to Lenin ('British gold'). The Communist Party in Britain was founded in 1920 (and welcomed with an enthusiastic editorial in the *Daily Herald*). But that was 33 years ago, or 'a little over 30 years ago', not 'nearly 40 years' ago. 'Nearly 40 years ago' implies at least 35-40 years ago. And that brings us straight to 1917—the year of the Russian Revolution. In other words, in contradiction to all the present myths of early support and enthusiasm by the right-wing leaders ('before Lenin went wrong', 'before the distortion by Stalin', etc.), Mr. Attlee has betrayed by this revealing phrase that he and the right-wing leaders regarded themselves, like Sir Winston Churchill, as fighting Communism from the very first outset of the victory of the working class and of the socialist revolution in Russia. From that basis of lofty superiority Mr. Attlee regards McCarthy as a late disciple. But we want no McCarthyism in Britain, not even with the rubber stamp of Transport House.

Masses in Movement

This inglorious picture of the present upper reaches of the dominant leadership in the Labour Party is by no means representative of the main body of the labour movement. What was revealed already in the agenda and proceedings at Douglas and at Margate has now received abundant confirmation in the first beginning of the entry into action of millions of organised workers on a national level, and through the mighty machinery of the trade union movement, on a scale without parallel since the years of 'Red Friday' and the general strike over a quarter of a century ago. December 2 constitutes a landmark in the history of the movement. The twenty-four hours' token strike of two million engineers, on the call of the Confederation, the strength of response and solidarity and militancy revealed, and the subsequent official call of the National Union of Railwaymen for national strike action—these are signals of the opening of a new epoch. The employers are entrenching their resistance. The Government, together with the right-wing leaders, will utilise every device to seek to arrest the movement. But the battle has opened. Millions more are in the field. Eight million tenants are under attack. Two and a quarter million Co-operative housewives signed the cost of living petition. The road is opening out for united advance, alike in the industrial and in the political field, against the employers and against Toryism. This is the call of 1954.

A Last Word to Our Readers

In relation to this perspective for united advance in 1954 we ask the forgiveness of our readers for making a reference to the special function which we believe our journal is fulfilling and can fulfil, and for whose further extension in the important period now opening out we invite their co-operation. For 33 years *Labour Monthly* has fought consistently in the forefront for the common aims of the labour movement and of socialism. Most of the leading figures of the labour movement during this historic era have at one time or another written in our pages. We are proud to have won the affection and support of a widening range of the key active workers in the trade union and political labour movement. During these years our range of readers has multiplied several times over. But in face of the decisive battles now before us we believe that the present situation calls for a very great further extension of our work. We therefore ask the attention of our readers to the statement on pages

24-25. In that statement we set out the net circulation figures of our journal during the past three years. We believe that our journal has been able to play an indisputable rôle in the advance of the left during these years, and in assisting the development of militant and informed political opinion, especially among all sections of the labour movement. For 1954 we are planning to carry forward and extend this rôle very much further. For this purpose we ask for the active co-operation of every single reader who values the aims for which we fight to take practical steps to extend the range of our journal among all active sections of the labour movement, and especially among those newly stirring, discussing ideas and policies and seeking their way forward, *i.e.*, all serious readers and fighters for whom our journal could be of assistance. This is no narrow domestic affair of a magazine, but an integral part of the fight for labour unity. *Labour Monthly* is already the most widely read political monthly journal of the labour and progressive movement in Britain. Let us in 1954 resolve to extend its range and usefulness as a weapon in our common fight for labour unity, peace and socialism.

December 14, 1953.

R.P.D.

Gilbert Hitchings, a valued friend to *Labour Monthly*, died on November 22, 1953. For years a member of the Executive Council of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, his last article in our magazine was 'The Academic Witch-hunt', September, 1950.

THE ITALIAN SOCIALIST PARTY AND THE POLICY OF UNITY OF THE MASSES

PIETRO NENNI

We are pleased to print this article specially written for the 'Labour Monthly' by the leader of the Italian Socialist Party. Pietro Nenni draws lessons from the experience of socialist-communist co-operation and unity in action which are of especial importance for the British labour movement. While frankly expressing his criticisms, from his standpoint, of aspects of Communist policy in the past, he shows how co-operation and unity in action have benefited both parties. Readers will recall the 'telegram to Nenni' crisis in the parliamentary Labour Party in 1948 when the Foreign Office policy, and that of the right-wing Labour leaders, was to support a small pro-American splinter group against the Italian Socialist Party, then and now the largest in Europe.—Ed., L.M.

SINCE the Italian General Elections of June 7, the Italian Socialist Party has been the subject of an increased amount of discussion. Round about 1950, there was a general conviction that the two splits of 1947 and 1948 had brought about the collapse of the Italian Socialist Party, which was now in a lifeless condition. (I refer of course, to the splits which took their name from Saragat and Romita, and led to the formation, or rather to the re-formation, in Italy, of a Reformist and Social Democratic Party—something which had already happened once before, in 1922, a few weeks before the march on Rome by Mussolini's Fascists.)

However, it is precisely from 1950 that we can date the revival of the Italian Socialist Party, following the work of reorganising its leading cadres made necessary by the splits. For this reason, the 1953 Elections came as a surprise to the Labourites and Social Democrats. Saragat's Social Democratic Party suffered a defeat, polling only 1,200,000 votes in the 1953 Elections as compared with 1,800,000 in 1948. The Italian Socialist Party polled 3½ million votes, with 75 seats in the Chamber of Deputies as compared with 42 previously. It must be said that, in general, the political progress made by our party among the masses is greater than that shown by

the election results, which could have been better; and they will be better as and when we fill in all the gaps in our organisation, especially in the South.

In our opinion, the relative success of our party (I say relative, because we did not reach our 1946 vote) is due to the policy of unity of the masses, which is the outstanding feature of our party. It has been said abroad, based on the analysis made by our Social Democrats, that our success was a success for the policy of Socialist Autonomy, made possible, firstly, by the fact that there was no Socialist-Communist bloc in the elections (as in 1948), and, secondly, by our electoral programme, the 'Socialist Alternative', worked out by the 31st National Congress of the Italian Socialist Party, held in Milan in January, 1952.

Of course, the elector who votes Socialist or Communist makes a political choice, and in this sense every Socialist vote is, in practice, a declaration of autonomy on the part of Socialists in relation to all other parties, including the Communist party. But in Italian political controversy of recent years, Socialist Autonomy has come to signify a policy directed against unity and a policy of anti-Communism, and it is not possible to interpret the results of the June 7 elections in this sense. In fact, the Communist Party polled 6,200,000 votes, and gained about 1½ million votes as compared with 1946, something which is perfectly explicable if we take into account the strength of its organisation, its compactness, and the fact that it has had no splits worthy of consideration.

Now, if we compare the vote for the 1948 Popular Front with the combined Socialist and Communist vote of 1953, what do we see? We see that the number of Left voters increased from about 8 million in 1948 (for a Popular Front list, in which for the purposes of apportioning the deputies the number of Socialist votes was calculated at 2-2½ million) to about 10 million. This means a significant advance for the policy of unity taken as a whole. This advance would have been much greater for us Socialists, had it not been for the 1947-48 splits, which had the result, firstly, that an important number of Socialist workers and peasants were discouraged by the splits and passed over to the Communist Party, and, secondly, that the Socialist Party lost its following among the middle class, and this following dispersed without even passing over to the Social Democrats, as is clear from the poor support that the latter had among the middle class.

There has been a similar confirmation of the correctness of the general policy followed by the Italian Socialist Party. This policy can be explained and justified by the conditions in which the class struggle has proceeded and is proceeding in Italy and by the doctrine of Marxism, by which the Italian Socialist Party has been almost continuously inspired.

It is true that the political strategy and tactics of the Italian Socialist Party differ from those of the other European Socialist Parties. This, however, is a feature of practically the whole history of the working class and Socialist movement in Italy and a direct and inevitable result of the violence of the social conflicts which have been sharper in our country than in England, France or Germany, not to speak of the Scandinavian countries. In the same way, the struggle for political democracy has always been, and continues to be, harder for us in general, as compared with the other countries mentioned, with the exception of Germany.

Thus, the Italian Socialist Party has always adopted a left policy, relative to the other Socialist Parties in Europe and in the world. It has anarchist origins, from the influence of which it has never entirely freed itself, at least until recent years. It accepted with the greatest interest and enthusiasm all revolutionary and pseudo-revolutionary novelties, beginning with the Syndicalism of Sorel, which in France interested only a few groups of intellectuals and workers, but in Italy—between 1906 and 1910—was enthusiastically acclaimed by wide sections of the working class.

The Italian Socialist Party has always been in the forefront in the struggle against colonial wars, from the first colonial adventure undertaken by our bourgeoisie in 1885 in Eritrea, which Socialists combatted with Andrea Costa's slogan 'Not a man, not a penny for the war in Africa', to the 1911 war in Libya, which was opposed by a general strike and an intense political and parliamentary struggle. (The opposition to Mussolini's adventure in Ethiopia in 1935-36 took on a different character, in view of the fact that all forms of public opposition had been silenced for 10 years, but it was no less firm and decided, as a result of the protest and initiative of the exiles and the clandestine groups inside the country.)

Moreover, the Italian Socialist Party was a resolute opponent of the 1914-18 Imperialist War, and even if the theoretical and practical foundations on which its struggle was based were not so firm as those of the anti-imperialist doctrine worked out by Lenin, they

nevertheless came near to it. Again, the Italian Socialist Party was unanimous in its break with the Second International, just as it was, in 1919, the first Socialist Party in Europe to join the Third International. From 1921, that is from the formation of a Communist Party in Italy, it was destined to have sharp differences with the Third International, in connection with problems which appeared matters of form but were actually matters of substance, but which had no effect on the spontaneous and sincere support of Italian Socialists for the October Revolution or their defence of it.

In Italy, the controversies between Socialists and Communists were no less sharp and dramatic than in France or Germany. But there always remained the feeling that, at bottom, these controversies were based on a misunderstanding and had no sense either historically or ideologically. For this reason, even in the midst of the sharp differences which, in the early period of the anti-Fascist exile, from 1927-1934, reached extreme forms of exasperation and vehemence on the Communist side, we for our part always retained the conviction that a common basis could be found for understanding and collaboration.

This basis was found in 1934, and in contradistinction to other Socialist Parties (for example the French and Spanish), the Italian Socialist Party has never abandoned it, apart from the 1939-40 period, following the German-Soviet non-aggression pact and the change in policy of the Comintern, up to the time of Hitler's aggression against the U.S.S.R.

In general, many mistakes are made by Socialists and Social Democrats in evaluating the motives which brought about, in 1934, the meeting of Socialists and Communists on the common ground of the anti-Fascist struggle and the policy of the Popular Front. Many are convinced that the change of policy of the Communist International between its 6th and 7th Congress corresponded to the tactical needs of the moment. In reality, however, the change was not a formal one but one of substance, even though, as far as the Communist Parties were concerned, the change remained linked to the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. But, apart from the 1939-40 period, the change always coincided spontaneously with Soviet foreign policy, just as it has, in substance, coincided with it from Yalta to the present day.

The 6th Congress in Moscow (July-August, 1928) in the erroneous anticipation of a new imminent revolution in Europe, heightened the struggle against social-democracy, the Left included, labelled as

'social-fascism'. If in France the decisions of the 6th Congress in Moscow had harmful consequences at the trade union, political and parliamentary level (where the communists were no longer distinguishing between right and left); if in Italy, and chiefly in the anti-Fascist emigration, the consequences were expressed in an accentuated communist polemic; in Germany the situation took a rapid turn towards disaster. There, to the errors of method and approach of the right-wing Social Democracy were added the errors of method and approach of the Communists, which had the result, amongst other things of enfeebling and almost ending the influence of the left within Social Democracy. The result was the victory of Hitler in January, 1933, and the critical situation in France in 1934, with the reactionary attempt at a 'putsch' against parliamentary democracy.

The very seriousness of the danger compelled Socialists and Communists to make another evaluation of their political and class relationships. In the Labour and Socialist International, the problem of common action between Socialists and Communists was posed by me at the conference of Socialist parties called by the Labour and Socialist International in Paris in August, 1933; and this developed widely, above all in Austria, through the work of Otto Bauer, and in France on the initiative of Zyromski. There had previously appeared the L.S.I. Manifesto of February 19 which invited the 3rd International to act in accordance with its responsibilities, and give up the idea of considering unity of action as a means of breaking up the Socialist Parties. My proposal at the Paris conference aimed at the organisation of a joint meeting of the two Internationals to study the problem of unity against Nazi-Fascism and in defence of peace.

As always, the masses were in advance of the parties in the common action. In the event, it was the mass of the French people who succeeded in winning unity in February, 1934, in the general strike against the Fascist 'Putsch' of February 6, confirming the judgment passed on them by Marx, that is their essential quality of political vanguard of the international working class. The consequences of this in France were immediate and positive, and appeared even sooner among the Italian émigrés who were strongly affected by the pressure for unity from the anti-Fascist movements inside Italy, and by the events in Germany and France.

The first agreements between Socialists and Communists were signed in the Spring of 1934 between the Italian Socialist Party and

the Italian Communist Party, and between the French Socialist Party (S.F.I.O.) and the French Communist Party. The first pact of united action was that between the two French parties in July, 1934, followed by that between the two Italian parties in August, 1934. Two years later the pact of united action between the Spanish Socialists and Communists was signed amidst the civil war. In the interval the 7th Congress of the Communist International, held from July-August, 1935, had reversed the policy of the preceding Congress, and advanced the policy of the united front in a plan for collaboration of Communist and Socialist parties, and for linking up with the left bourgeoisie in a popular front movement. 'We must not confine ourselves,' said Dimitrov in his report to the 7th Congress in Moscow, 'to bare appeals to struggle for the proletarian dictatorship. We must find and advance those slogans and forms of struggle which arise from the vital needs of the masses, from the level of their fighting capacity at the present stage of development.'

The coming together of Socialists and Communists took place on the basis of clear, open democratic struggle, something which we Italian Socialists, for our part, had always urged and striven for. The change in policy corresponded to the particular needs that had arisen with the advent of Hitlerism in Germany, with the reactionary threat in France (foiled in 1936 by the electoral victory of the popular front and the formation of the Blum government) and with Franco's pronunciamiento in Spain. But in our opinion, it corresponded to needs which were fundamental and not tactical, and which could be expected to survive, and, in Italy, have effectively survived, the particular motives which had brought the new policy into being 20 years ago.

In countries like Italy, where it has been put into practice and is deep rooted, united action has had in the past, as it has at present, a profound democratic content. This can clearly be seen if we examine the united struggles fought by the mass of the Italian people and by their working-class vanguards in the past twenty years. These struggles can be grouped into four distinct periods, of which one has just begun.

The first period, from 1934-1943, was that of the clandestine struggle against Fascism and the Fascist war; the second, from 1944-1947, was the period of the destruction of Fascism, of the partisan war, of the coming into being of the democratic and repub-

lican state by means of a vast popular movement which culminated in the republican victory of June 2, 1946. The third period started in 1947, with the breaking up of Socialist and trade union unity and of the co-operation of Communists, Socialists and Christian Democrats in the government (under the Premiership of Signor De Gasperi). All this was done by an action promoted by the Americans, the Vatican and the Conservative forces of the bourgeoisie, which latter had in the meantime been re-establishing themselves in the economic field, and, as a consequence in the political field. From then begins a period of retrogression of the democratic state, brought about in the main by motives of international politics, that is by the clash that had come about between the United States and the Soviet Union. In these last six years, we have been engaged in a day by day struggle in defence of peace and the neutrality of our country; in denouncing the hazards to which peace is exposed as a result of American and Atlantic Pact policy; in defence of civil liberties trodden underfoot by the Americanised clerical majority with which Social Democrats have consistently associated themselves; in action to reduce the plague of unemployment and check that poverty which in Italy has reached its most acute phase and is unsurpassed in Europe except in Greece and Spain.

June 7 marks the beginning of the fourth period. The elections have not reversed the previous situation, but for the forces of the working class and the people they have created more favourable conditions for resistance and counter offensive action. Since June 7 there exists the possibility of a Socialist alternative to the policy of the last six years. If we Socialists had obtained a million votes more—as we most probably would if there was an election today—the Socialist alternative would have been applied as one applies a law of arithmetic. However, on the basis of the present relation of forces in Parliament, the Socialist alternative is only possible if we succeed in forcing the Christian Democrats out of their position of immobile attachment to a centrist policy on to a position where they are favourable to agreement with the left. This is our objective today in the struggle in parliament and in the united mass struggle in the country, without which latter struggle parliamentary activity would rapidly degenerate into opportunism.

Thus, once again, the Italian Socialist Party's policy of unity is given concrete form in a firm, consistent, democratic policy, which marshals the entire working class and peasantry of our country into

a position of democratic struggle for peace, and to give political democracy an effective content of economic democracy.

From this point of view, the value of the Italian Socialist Party's 20 years' experience is not only national but international. Above all, our policy is not just bound up with my personality, as facile commentators abroad and also at home would have it, but expresses the developing needs of the working class and popular movement.

A COMMON POLICY FOR LABOUR

HARRY POLLITT

NINETEEN-HUNDRED-AND-FIFTY-THREE was a year which marked a new stage in the development of the British working-class movement. Ever since the end of the Second World War the right-wing Labour and Trade Union leaders in Britain have intensified their efforts to spread illusions amongst the working people of Britain about the possibility of making advances without a real fight against capitalism. The experiences of the past years and the bitter realities of today have shattered many of these illusions. Millions of workers are now beginning to see that it is not possible to maintain, let alone improve, their standard of life without engaging in powerful class struggles against the employing class. The soothing syrup poured out by Social Democracy now turns out to have a bitter taste.

The reality behind all the talk of the 'New Toryism' is the fierce attack being made by the Tories on working-class standards at home, and their use of violence and force on an unprecedented scale against the colonial peoples. This is why more and more workers have now come to understand that only by engaging in mass action can they defend themselves. This explains why in the closing months of 1953, we witnessed such mighty demonstrations of millions of workers demanding wage increases—demonstrations which in their size and militancy caused every thinking worker to recall the great days of the General Strike, the Miners' Lock-Out and Hunger Marches of the years between the two world wars.

For years they have been told 'Leave it to the M.P.s', or 'Leave it to the Trade Union leaders'. But the result of leaving it to the M.P.s. and the right-wing Trade Union leaders, is that conditions

have been imposed which are the very antithesis of what the Labour and Trade Union movement for years has fought for. Today a great section of the workers feel that it is impossible to make ends meet unless they work excessive overtime. The forty-hour week, which for so long has been an objective of the trade union movement, is hardly even spoken of now. Women go out to work, not voluntarily and on the basis of equal pay and equal rights with men, but because the pressure of economic necessity compels them to do so. The miners, who for so long have had the slogan of a Five-Day Week and a Seven-Hour Day, now feel compelled to work on Saturdays in order to augment their wages. The deliberate policy of the Tory Government has cut real wages and drastically increased the prices of food and other necessities. During 1953 hardly a week passed without some essential item in the working-class budget going up in price. And towards the end of 1953 the Tory Government promised that this process would continue in 1954, when it announced its proposals to 'free' butter, margarine, cheese and cooking fats—proposals which will send our food bill up by £25 millions a year.

Yet the Tories, who never tire of making speeches against wage increases, are now proposing to increase the rents of six million workers by amending the Rent Restrictions Act. This is the most open class measure even this Government of the capitalist class has yet dared to talk of. For it will take £80 million out of the pockets of the workers and put this amount into the pockets of the landlords. Not all Mr. MacMillan's clever oratory will be able to conceal this fact. And it is already clear that coming on top of the series of rent increases of Council houses, this proposal will meet with the fiercest resistance on the part of tenants all over Britain. What the Tory Government can expect has been shown by the great tenants' movements which developed in 1953 on the Council House estates where rents were raised. Now private and Council tenants alike are uniting their efforts to make it impossible for the Tory Government's plan to be operated.

It seems only yesterday that the Labour leaders were telling us that they had created the 'Welfare State'; that this was the answer to Communism, that it proved you could give everyone security and a good standard of life without really interfering with capitalism, and that Britain was the envy of the world in this respect.

What has happened now to the 'Welfare State'? Today it is not even the Subsistence State, for no less an authority than Lord Beveridge has told us that the level of National Insurance benefits is below subsistence level. It is very good that the Labour leaders

WHAT YOU CAN DO

AT THE OPENING of a year that will be decisive for the development of the Labour Movement in the fight for peace, 'Labour Monthly' sends its greetings and makes a special call to every reader.

The part this magazine has played in building up informed opinion at home and abroad is known to our readers. Such articles last year as *Challenge to Britain* by J. B. Figgins, *A Veteran's Voice for Peace* by Mrs. Florence Mattison, *The Great Opportunity* by D. N. Pritt, Q.C. (as well as the contributions from local Labour Party members) together with the Editor's Notes of the Month, helped to prepare the way for the great advance of the Left revealed at the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party Conference—and now in the developing action of the industrial workers. But a much greater advance lies before us in 1954.

Our magazine circulates widely among the active members of the labour and trade union movement—but not widely enough as yet. Many thinking people have still to be introduced to *Labour Monthly*, and would find in it just what they are seeking.

This is where we wish to place some facts before our readers and make a special appeal to every one of them.

Rising costs compelled us in September, 1951, to raise the price from 1s. to 1s. 6d. This had inevitably an effect on our circulation, although the overwhelming majority of our readers maintained their subscriptions.

Here are the figures:

			1951	1952	1953
1st quarter	...	...	15,057	15,015	13,593
2nd quarter	...	...	15,632	14,666	13,582
3rd quarter	...	...	15,831*	14,246	13,308
4th quarter	...	...	15,298	13,778	13,038

***Price rise September, 1951.**

Now in comparison with other political monthlies, this circulation is creditable. Unlike many subsidised political journals (as illustrated in the losses of the Labour Party Headquarters on literature) we are independent and self-supporting. Nor do we have the indirect subsidy

FOR LABOUR UNITY

of commercial advertisements which our circulation would normally justify. We pay for all costs out of our readers' subscriptions and the help of readers' donations to the Fund.

But we cannot see without anxiety a fall of 2,000 in two years. We want not only to make good this loss—and that rapidly—but also to see a big increase, in step with the present and coming advance of the whole Labour Movement.

For this reason we make a special appeal, not so much to the Old Guard who have always stood by us (though it applies to them also) but particularly to those of our readers who value the contents of *Labour Monthly* but do not extend it to others. To them we would say:

"You appreciate and find useful—judging from what you say in your letters to us—what is written in our magazine. But have you, dear reader, thought of sharing that usefulness with others? Or do you hoard it, as your magic talisman, to supply you with your best facts and arguments for a discussion or a speech? Don't be a miser with the 'Labour Monthly'. Get your friends in the Labour Party and trade union or at your place of work to read it too. In this way you will gain more: for you will be helping to build up a mighty movement for a better life."

We make a special call to every single reader of the *Labour Monthly* to get at any rate ONE additional reader. You can see for yourselves what effect this would have on the total.

We aim to carry this campaign throughout the whole of the year 1954 and will report to you further on the progress.

All together, our readers, for a big advance in 1954. Extend the use of 'Labour Monthly' as a political weapon for this advance and for Labour Unity.

With best wishes and greetings from the

EDITORIAL BOARD

were forced at Margate to agree to raise these benefits if they were returned at the next General Election, but why is there not an immediate mighty campaign on behalf of all who receive pensions and benefits, so that this shameful position is ended at once?

All the Social Services are under fire from the Tories. These hard-faced business men care not a rap for the future of the nation's children. They want the working class to be educated just enough to be able to do the work that is necessary to provide the bosses' profits, but no more. So they take every opportunity to cut down expenditure on schools, to deny the teachers the salary increases which are their due (and which are necessary to attract more people to this vital profession) and to restrict University education and technical education. They do this in spite of the appalling conditions in schools and technical colleges which have recently been revealed by official reports. The Tories maintain the Health Service charges which the Labour Government first imposed, and the Health Centres and new hospitals which are so urgently needed are further away than ever.

It is true that the Tory Government bears the principal responsibility for these attacks on the working people, but we should never forget that on almost every issue the way was prepared for them by the actions of the Labour Government. The 'Welfare State' of the Labour leaders was in fact never a Welfare State, but even the limited gains won by the workers in the immediate post-war period were bound to come under fire as a result of the policy of colossal rearmament, colonial oppression and subservience to America, which Tory and right-wing Labour leaders alike supported and still support.

Now that the workers are going into action against the results of this policy, no weapon of the ruling class is too shameful or too brutal to be used against them. They are denounced as 'agitators', 'wreckers of the country's economy', 'traitors to the community', and all the rest of the epithets which for years have been on the lips of the employers and Tories whenever a worker dared to ask for a wage increase. If they venture to go on strike, all the force of the State machine is immediately brought into play to break the strike. The armed forces, allegedly called up to 'defend Britain from the Russians' are used to defend the employers from the British workers. Of course, in this 'great democracy' the right to strike is guaranteed—but just let anyone exercise that right, and see what happens! Now, indeed, a great volume of propaganda is being conducted by *The Times* and various spokesmen of the capitalist class for legisla-

tive action to take away even the nominal right to strike. And the most serious aspect of the whole situation is that what would once have caused a storm of protest throughout the whole Labour Movement is apparently now taken for granted as a normal thing. For this, the Labour Government, which never hesitated to use troops in industrial disputes after the war, must take the main blame.

These attacks on the British workers are accompanied by the most appalling crimes against the peoples of the colonies. Foul deeds are being done in Kenya and Malaya which disgrace the name of Britain. At a time when our country was never so in need of friends, the British Tory Government is pursuing a barbarous colonial policy which is antagonising the vast majority of the human race, and dragging our honour in the dust throughout Africa and Asia. Lyttelton's outrageous attack on democracy in British Guiana is the latest and most blatant example of a policy which is as much against the interests of the British people as it is against the interests of the colonial people.

Never was it so clear that the British and colonial peoples have common interests, common enemies, and a common struggle for independence. The troops used against the people of Kenya, Malaya and British Guiana are also used against British workers. The policy of British Imperialism means that young British conscripts are sent thousands of miles away from Britain to occupy other lands, while American troops come here to occupy Britain.

Britain has never been in such danger as today. She is occupied by foreign troops and has been turned into an advance base for American atom-bombers. American policy is bringing about a resurgence of Britain's mortal enemy—aggressive West German militarism and fascism. Economically the American millionaires are increasing their stranglehold on Britain, in particular by the bans on East-West trade which the Tories meekly accept, when there was never such a need for Britain to be free to trade wherever the greatest benefit can result. No amount of Tory sunshine talk can obscure the harsh underlying facts of Britain's economic position. And most dangerous of all to the British economy is the increasing menace of an American trade depression, which, tied as we are to the U.S. by the present suicidal policy, would have disastrous effects on our whole economy. When to these facts is added the Tory surrender to American war policy, resulting in the burying of the Churchill proposal of May 11 for top level talks, it is no wonder that

the questioning amongst the mass of the people and their readiness to take action in support of constructive policies was never so great as today.

In these circumstances the 23rd Congress of the Communist Party which is to be held at Easter, has an importance not only for Communists, but for the whole Labour Movement. There the democratically elected representatives of the Communist Party, including some of the foremost figures in the Trade Union movement, delegates from the key industries and factories of Britain who command the confidence of thousands of their fellow workers, leading representatives of the arts and sciences, fighters on behalf of the women and the youth, will thrash out a policy which can save Britain and lead to great strides forward being taken by our people along the British Road to Socialism.

It is the fashion in these days for practically every Tory representative of the employers and every right-wing Labour or Trade Union leader to justify their reactionary anti-working class policies by a smokescreen of anti-Communism. It doesn't matter where workers put forward their demands for better conditions, democratic rights and freedom from foreign control—whether in Britain, Malaya, Kenya or British Guiana—the howl goes up that 'the Communists are behind it', 'It is a Communist-inspired plot', and so on. This is supposed to curdle the peoples' blood so that the capitalists and imperialists can themselves carry out their plots against the liberties and standard of living of the ordinary people.

But it is ceasing to take a trick. More and more people are realising that their real enemies are not the Communists but those who defend the employers. More and more people are drawing the contrast between the sterile anti-Communism of the Tories and right-wing Labour leaders and the constructive policy advanced by the Communist Party to bring about peace and the advance to Socialism. There is also an increasing understanding of the urgent need for unity in action between all who want peace and Socialism.

Our 23rd Party Congress will focus attention on the greatest weakness of the Labour movement today—the lack of a conscious organised unity of purpose and action behind a progressive policy. The overcoming of this weakness is the key to every problem facing the British people. Unity behind a new policy is the only means of ensuring success for the present and future aims of the working

people. Continued divisions, bans and proscriptions imposed by the right-wing leaders only help the Tories and the capitalist class. The workers need unity more than ever before, for never was it more true that 'unity is strength'.

The 23rd Congress of the Communist Party will be guided by one great aim—how to strengthen the working class in every aspect for the fight against capitalism and to help forward the developments towards Socialism in Britain. It is to help in the realisation of this aim that we have put forward for discussion by the whole Labour movement in the period before the Congress our suggestions as to the policy behind which all sections of the Movement could be united:

At Home

- ★ Higher wages, unemployment benefits and pensions, lower prices, more houses, more schools and better health services. No increases in rents or rates.
- ★ An attack on the big monopolists through an extension of nationalisation.
- ★ A great united campaign to defeat the Tory Government.

National Independence

- ★ An end to the American military occupation of Britain.
- ★ No restrictions on Britain's right to trade with any country.
- ★ Solidarity with the peoples of Malaya, Kenya, British Guiana, and all colonial peoples, and the withdrawal of British troops from all colonies and dependent countries.
- ★ National independence of Britain from American domination, and independence and freedom for all peoples of the Empire.

Abroad

- ★ A Korean Conference, with the participation of India and other Asian neutrals, that can ensure peace; and a declaration that British troops will not fight against Korea or against China.
- ★ Admission of China to the United Nations.
- ★ No arming of the Nazis in Western Germany, but a peace conference now to bring about a united, peaceful, democratic Germany.
- ★ All-round reduction of armaments and prohibition of weapons of mass destruction.
- ★ Top-level talks between the Great Powers to ease international tension.

Our 23rd Communist Party Congress will estimate the stage reached in the fight for this immediate programme, and will show the next steps that have to be taken to make it a reality. It will also have the responsibility of discussing what has been done since the publication of the Party Programme, *The British Road To*

Socialism, which charts the future for the British working people, to make it the property of the entire Labour Movement. The vision of what Socialism would mean for Britain and its people will inspire every delegate to the Congress and give to all its discussions a perspective beyond today and tomorrow.

Our Congress will be a Congress of faith in the working class of Britain. There will be no speeches at it designed to damp down the struggle of the workers, to deprive the people of confidence in their own strength. On the contrary, the note that will be sounded will be one of confidence in the mighty power of the British working class to work miracles, once it is united, organised and given the correct leadership.

We shall meet in the consciousness that the peoples of all the world look to the British people today. Never was the role of Britain more decisive. Never was there a Government in Britain whose policy was so in conflict with the needs of the people. Never was there a greater gap between the rank-and-file of the Labour movement and the policy of their leaders. Our Congress will face up to its responsibilities to the international movement by showing how the rank-and-file can force a change in Labour's policy, how this can lead to the early and overwhelming defeat of the Tory Government, and how Britain can take her place in the vanguard of the world forces of peace and progress by adopting a policy of peace and independence.

We shall endeavour to inspire the working class to new efforts and greater victories. We shall resolve to strengthen the Communist Party, the Young Communist League and the *Daily Worker* as the indispensable leadership of the militant working-class forces in Britain. We shall offer the hand of friendship to all, however they may differ from us on many issues, who want to preserve peace and prevent economic crisis. We shall declare our undying hostility to all who want war and all who attack the conditions of the people.

We are confident that our Party Congress will represent a landmark in the struggle of all British workers by hand and brain who want to secure economic prosperity, our National Independence, a Lasting Peace and decisive advances towards Socialism.

LABOUR MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES: *United Kingdom, 12 months, 18s. post free; \$3.00 in U.S.A. and Canada (\$3.50 if first class mail); elsewhere overseas, 19s. post free.*

Lenin in October, 1918



WAGES : THE NEXT STEP

J. R. SCOTT*

WHILST the stirring events of the past few weeks—particularly the engineers' historic action of December 2 and the railwaymen's threat to strike—have made a firm impression on and have a great significance for those who actually participated as well as those who were 'lookers-on' (sympathetic or otherwise), there are, of course, much deeper-rooted matters attendant and complementary to these events. There are certain fundamental issues, with a number of facets. There are things that go much deeper than the struggle of some three million workers to obtain a wage increase of 15 per cent., terrifically important as such an act is of its own accord or, so to speak, in its own right.

Ever since the end of the war in 1945 there has been a constant stream of propaganda by leading industrialists, numbers of Trade Union officials, leaders of all the main political parties, in a common effort to focus attention on what they are pleased to call 'the new situation': namely, that it is 'necessary' for all to collaborate, the politicians, the trade union organisation with the employers' organisation, managers with shop stewards, etc., in order to increase production. Only by such means, they all claim, can the economic and political problems which beset our country today be solved. To put it in harsh but true words, the effort of all this gentry is to convince the mass of people that the class struggle no longer exists because, so they say, unless we all pull together and recognise, appreciate and accept each other's position, we cannot determine whether prosperity or poverty awaits us all. Put another way, it is to say that capitalism has to be accepted, made to work where it is 'inefficient', and that we must not take any steps which attack the citadels of capitalism and its ultimate destruction.

But capitalism, ever since its birth and right through its development, has divided the human race into warring classes. There remains with us the fact, and it will be so while capitalism exists, of a sharp division—politically, economically and socially—between those who own the means of production, distribution and exchange,

*As our readers will know Mr. J. R. Scott is a member of the Executive Council of the A.E.U. and an Executive Council member of the Confederation of the Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

and those who, owning none of those things, are consequently obliged, come what may, to sell their labour power as a means of obtaining sustenance and a livelihood.

All the talk of the 'Welfare State', industrial democracy, nationalisation, Development Councils and the like cannot alter these fundamental facts, which apply in the Engineering and Shipbuilding Industry as well as in other industries. The industry, or rather the leaders of the industry, play power politics in the economic and political field. In the wider field, trade associations deal both with wages and conditions and with economic questions—prices, allocation of markets, the subservience of the politicians to their will. This is exercised through the multitude, the bureaucracy, we might say, of trade associations (Society of British Aircraft Constructors, Agricultural Engineers' Association, Water Tube Boiler Makers' Association, etc., etc.) and negotiating Federations. It is exercised through the Federation of British Industry (though, while engineering companies are members of this somewhat unwieldy body, they appear to exercise their pressure on their own).

These associations are claimed to be 'democratic'; if so, it is a 'democracy' of the feudal barons. In reality everyone knows the power and influence exercised by the powerful Vickers grouping, with its establishments in Newcastle, Barrow, Manchester, London, Erith, Southampton and other places in Great Britain. All talk of democratic decisions falls by the wayside when the major interests of the Vickers combine are likely to be prejudiced or placed in jeopardy. This huge organisation is in company with similar ones like the English Electric, the General Electric, and so on. Since before the war, these giant combines have enjoyed a favourable position, in that they occupy and control a monopoly that is difficult, if not impossible, for any other groupings to challenge. As a consequence, by virtue of the war and its aftermath, they have been able to enjoy very high profit margins, to pay high dividends and at the same time to place hundreds of thousands of pounds to reserve. Having established that position, they expect and demand that the high profit standards obtained shall be maintained. All the talk of saving the country, 'the export drive', or whatever other cliché is utilised, does not alter the fact that their main object is to maintain their profit margin in the position of monopoly.

The root of the matter lies in the big engineering combines. It is true that there are a host of small engineering firms. But in important matters they are controlled by the big concerns. Around

the big concerns are the trade associations which settle policy and often price; for as we know, whenever the feeble Monopolies Commission turns over a tree in the jungle of modern capitalism, a host of restrictive practices are revealed. The big concerns are not always technically monopolies in the sense that each controls one process. But, apart from understandings between what are called in modern economic parlance 'oligopolies' (the two or three leading concerns in any one line), there are directoral connections of considerable interest. Thus Vickers—and in engineering wherever Vickers sits is the head of the table—is connected with Associated Electrical Industries and with S. Smith & Sons (England); and Smiths again is connected with Electrical and Musical Industries; and this again with David Brown Corporation and Associated Commercial Vehicles. But the real importance of the big engineering concerns is in another direction; their connection with the central power of finance. This is the basic grip of monopoly. In Britain 1 per cent. of the population own half of the wealth.

The feature of monopolies is that they eliminate 'competition'. Having obtained a market, they seek to control it, not necessarily by extending the production of their goods into other fields, but by building a high wall around *their* markets. The empire is their backyard; their methods, as the chairman of Joseph Lucas (Industries) explained is the 'understanding between directors of Lucas and of the other companies which Lucas supplied' (*Financial Times*, December 15, 1953).

This partly explains their attitude towards East-West trade—apart from political considerations. For if the new field of East-West trade is to be entered (and even if the developing competition from Germany under America's domination is to be contested) many of their products would have to be developed, adapted, modified or accommodated to the requirements of other nations.* If the skill and inventiveness of British designers and craftsmen could be unlocked what a prospect would be opened up! But the attitude (again apart from political considerations) appears to be that if East-West trade (or new markets anywhere) could be obtained easily and without complications, then monopolies would readily enter into the field. In practice they refuse to face up to it: they shrink back into existing markets, around which they have built their wall,

*The experience of Sir Frank Whittle as recorded in his book, the fact that Ferguson has linked up with International Harvester, the development of the diesel engine are examples which show up the general attitude.

and, in so doing, aim at maintaining the high profit margin that has been obtained over the years. This too means restricting trade and employment—the fruits of backwardness.

It is this aspect of the matter which directs all thinking people to study and examine the reports and discussions at the 19th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the autumn of 1952. There the question was discussed of the development of monopoly capitalism in the stage of decaying imperialism with nearly half the world under a socialist economy. Capitalism today is no longer developing the free exchange of goods nor encouraging initiative for new ideas and new products, but rather is it showing a tendency to maintain restrictive practices to a high degree, with the determination to maintain the high profit margin.

The main features and requirements of the basic economic law of modern capitalism might be formulated roughly in this way: the securing of the maximum capitalist profit through the exploitation, ruin and impoverishment of the majority of the population of the given country, through the enslavement and systematic robbery of the peoples of other countries, especially backward countries, and, lastly, through wars and militarisation of the national economy, which are utilised for the obtaining of the highest profits.

(Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R., by J. V. Stalin.)

In this setting, therefore, the whole rôle of monopoly capitalism comes into sharp relief, and the decision of both the Engineering and Shipbuilding Employers' Federations to refuse an increase of wages to the workers is fundamentally bound up with this all-important issue. Monopoly capitalism has no interest in its people, it is quite prepared to exploit them in every degree and by a process of events to depress their standard of living, so long as they can maintain their profit margin. 'Maximum profit is the motor of monopoly capitalism.'

Here we may note the varying changes of approach of the capitalist newspapers towards the engineers' 15 per cent. claim in recent weeks. First there was hostility, on the ground that it was impossible to meet the demand of 15 per cent.; secondly there was a conspiracy of silence; then, because there had developed a mass movement—not only engineers—around the demands for wages increases, they were obliged, very reluctantly, and yet with a great deal of discussion, to report certain facts. It is not without interest, therefore, that an article appeared in the *Observer* on Sunday, November 22,

1953, which in general was a fairly factual presentation, and which after dealing with the point that it would be 'wishful thinking to dismiss the 15 per cent. demand as just a Communist plot', and that 'indeed all the evidence suggests that the 15 per cent. demand has come from every section of the workers, including many Roman Catholics', went on:

As for the Employers, they have already turned down the men's demand, and there is no sign of weakening; on the contrary, the fear was expressed over the week-end that some employers might lock out their workers on December 3 as a reprisal. The threat seems to have got to the ears of the Employers' organisation since it has just issued a statement advising its members to act cautiously.

Another point to be noticed is that the Employers' Federation has recently appointed a new Director, and although he may be a man of ability, he cannot be expected to have the knowledge of his predecessor. Because of his comparative inexperience, the President has more power than usual this year, and *Sir Percy Mills is not exactly renowned for sweetness and light.* (Our emphasis.)

And, of course, the shocking article that appeared in the *Daily Herald* on Wednesday, December 2, over the name of Harold Hutchinson is evidence of the other side of this self-same medal. It reads:

Is the strike weapon or the partial strike in the form of a ban on overtime and piecework in the interests of the workers in the present position of Britain, when the standard of living and the level of employment is determined mainly by the level of production and exports?

Here, and in two newspapers of alleged opposite character, we have in a nutshell the presentation of the common rôle in the defence and maintenance of monopoly capitalism.

From this it can be clearly seen that in the struggle that is to ensue, in the endeavour to force from the Engineering and Ship-building Employers an increase in wages, there is a much deeper and more fundamental issue. Here, coming into battle for the first time for many, many years, are the opposing forces in capitalist society. On the one hand monopoly capitalism, fighting with all the political and economic power at its disposal for what it possesses and to maintain its high profit margin and to strive for the maximum profit: on the other hand masses of workers slowly but surely coming to understand the situation, and determined not to have their standard of living depressed.

Here is, then, the very sharp clash of interest which, if not fought out to a finish in this battle, certainly must be fought out at some

time in the future, until the position of the classes is reversed. To fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the masses of the British people, both on the immediate question of their standard of living, and for the future, a much more conscious understanding of the deep social struggle which is about to be entered into is absolutely necessary. Whole destinies of the people of this country are at stake. For if the people are to improve their position, it cannot be by virtue of co-operation with monopoly capitalism and its attendants, but by the raising of the banner of socialism, the banner of struggle, the banner of destruction of capitalism.

Only thus shall we eliminate the baseness of capitalism where maximum profit for the few at the expense of the many is the over-riding law. Only thus shall we march forward to Socialism and 'the maximum satisfaction of the material and cultural requirements of society; instead of development of production with breaks in the continuity from boom to crisis and from crisis to boom—unbroken expansion of production; instead of periodic breaks in technical development accompanied by destruction of the productive forces in society—an unbroken process of perfecting production on the basis of higher techniques.' (*Ibid.*)

Meantime in the winter of 1953-54 the wages fight is developing and broadening out—witness the railwaymen's struggle for 15 per cent., and the manifest effect of even the threat of strike action. All can feel confidence in the strength of the working class. They have shown their readiness to respond wherever a lead has been given. In 1954 the battle will go forward.

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

INDIAN FUTURE

The immediate revolutionary tasks which must be accomplished by the Indian masses—the achievement of national emancipation, the destruction of feudalist bondage, the establishment of social and political rights for the workers and peasants—are all tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. There are many stages yet before India can enter upon the socialist revolution. Nevertheless, the present tasks can only be carried out by a movement in which the leading rôle is played by the proletariat.

From *The Indian League for Independence*,
by Clemens Dutt, January, 1929.

THE REAL TERRORISTS IN KENYA

MONICA WHATELY

WHEN a State of Emergency was declared in Kenya a year and more ago, the Colonial Secretary and other spokesmen of the British Government indignantly denied allegations that an attack was being made against the legitimate demands of Africans in Kenya. All along they have solemnly declared that military and police operations in Kenya are restricted to the suppression of a minority of 'terrorists' alleged to be organised by the Mau Mau. Prior to the state of emergency, repeated warnings were given by responsible African leaders that an all-out attack upon their democratic organisations was being prepared by the white settlers. On September 30, 1952, four African unofficial members of the Kenya Legislative Council issued a statement which said

The recent move by the European elected members and their leader on what is termed crime and unrest in Kenya is dictated by the interests of the European settlers who, in their desire to divert attention from the social and economic problems facing the African people, and to justify their attacks against civil liberties, have embarked on a campaign of misrepresentation by grossly exaggerating the extent of crime and subversive activities. . . .

Attempts are also being made to destroy and wreck the Kenya African Union—the only political organisation representative of all Africans in Kenya—at a time when the country faces important constitutional changes.

(Manchester Guardian, September 30, 1952.)

These warnings by African leaders were ignored, and, under pressure from the white settlers and the pretext of combatting an alleged secret 'terrorist' organisation, a State of Emergency was declared in Kenya on October 20, 1952, simultaneously with the arrival of troops in the Colony. When Mr. Lyttelton made his statement in the House of Commons on the emergency measures taken, 'not a single Opposition voice was raised in criticism'. *(Manchester Guardian, October 22, 1952.)*

The correctness of the warnings given by African leaders has now been conclusively proved with the recent publication of extracts from the newsletter of the European Electors' Union—the mouth-piece of the white settlers in Kenya. On August 7, 1952, over two months *before* the declaration of the emergency a 14-point memorandum was submitted to the Government of Kenya by the European Electors' Union, through their Elected Members' Organisation. A covering letter was sent with the memorandum,

giving the background to one aspect of its recommendations 'namely, the neutralisation of political leaders'. The letter points out that some years previously the Electors' Union had urged on Mr. Foster Sutton, the then Member for Law and Order, the need to neutralise certain African leaders. The letter continues that the time has now arrived 'for their neutralisation *or liquidation*'. Both documents are signed by Kendall Ward, Executive Officer.

The memorandum itself draws attention to the need to 'combat and suppress the present wave of crime and subversive activity', and proceeds to make certain proposals, which, if not acted upon by the Government, the white settlers would 'themselves feel that the time had come for them to act in default of Government intervention'. The memorandum points out that 'as it was impossible to deal with the situation under ordinary law the Government should declare a state of emergency' which would enable them to introduce 'all such measures as might be necessary for the suppression of subversive activity, crime, and the restoration of law and order'. To restore this law and order, it proposes curfews, a pass system, corporal punishment, and a system of rewards for 'Africans laying information of use to Government in suppressing crime, etc.'

The recent publication by Her Majesty's Government of the annual report on Kenya for 1952 officially explodes these wild and extravagant allegations of a wave of crime and subversive activity. Official figures of crime in Kenya for the years 1951 and 1952 are:

			1951	1952
Crime against property	...	...	13,975	15,930
Crime against persons	...	...	1,086	904

These figures certainly do not indicate a crime wave. Nonetheless, the Government very willingly introduced a State of Emergency and promptly implemented all the proposals made by the white settlers, who, in their Newsletter of November 1952, boastfully proclaim that 'our suggestions for dealing with the present emergency have been extensively implemented by the Government'.

However, it is the concluding paragraph of the white settlers' memorandum which pinpoints the real cause of the State of Emergency and its subsequent stark and tragic story of mass slaughter and unbearable suffering. This illuminating passage reads:

Associated with the whole of this present position were the statements being made by African leaders in regard to the European Highlands. Such statements the Committee considered were dangerous and inflammatory. The Committee were of the opinion that Government should

make it quite clear that the position of the European Highlands as laid down by the Kenya Land Commission in 1933 and as established by Order-in-Council, was unassailable. Statements now being made by African leaders are provocative in the extreme and if African leaders persist in the sort of claim they are now making it will result in the provocation of the European community to such an extent that sooner or later some individuals will take the law into their own hands.

What are the 'sort of claims' the Africans are making, to which the white settlers take such extreme exception?

The very modest claims of the Africans were incorporated in the Land Petition circulated by the Kenya African Union in 1951, which obtained over 400,000 signatures. The petition stated that 'a grievous wrong is being suffered by the people of Kenya through the alienation of 16,700 square miles of the most fertile land in Kenya and its transference to European settlers, without the consent of the people of Kenya and without compensation for the value of the land' resulting in a disastrous situation of mass poverty and malnutrition for the African people. The petition therefore made the modest claim that Africans shall 'immediately be allowed to occupy and farm the large unused areas which are in the territories reserved to Europeans' and that 'immigration of further settlers shall be stopped in view of the land hunger from which the African community suffers'. Such a modest claim—put forward in a completely constitutional manner through a petition to the House of Commons at Westminster!

This is the background to the State of Emergency. But what is the position since its declaration? Mbiyu Koinange has repeatedly claimed that what is happening in Kenya today is genocide. The British Government and the white settlers are murdering the African people. The present number of Africans killed is over 4,000, yet by the summer of last year when about a thousand Africans had lost their lives, the *Observer* stated 'It is only a matter of . . . how many will be killed before active resistance stops' (July 8, 1953). The evidence for this charge of genocide continues to mount. On April 2 and 9, the weekly news digest of the *Hindustan Times* reported Mr. Murumbi (Secretary of the Kenya African Union) as stating in India that European settlers in Kenya had been given the right to shoot coloured people at sight, and that wholesale murders had been committed under this system. When an attempt was made by Mr. Peter Evans, on May 6, 1953, to substantiate charges of indiscriminate murder, he was at once deported by order of the Governor.

As early as February 1, 1953, the *Manchester Guardian* published a report of a protest to the Governor of Kenya about the use of

collective punishment, violence towards suspected persons, and third degree measures by both African and European police in attempts to gain information from the Kikuyu people about Mau Mau activities, made by a Secretary of a Missionary Society, Canon T. C. F. Bewes.

The extension of the death penalty 'for consorting with terrorists who are in possession of firearms' (*Manchester Guardian*, September 15, 1953) or 'for trafficking in firearms or committing any act likely to assist the operation of terrorists or impede security forces' (*The Times*, May 15, 1953) taken in conjunction with the statements in the *Manchester Guardian* (April 4, 1953) that in Nairobi city area all police have been instructed to shoot to kill if they see any suspicious assemblies of Africans and fail to get a quick and satisfactory answer to a first challenge, and the statement by General Erskine that 'in prohibited areas security forces regarded everybody they saw as an enemy and shot them. . . . In other types of operation Kikuyu were not treated as an enemy and were only shot at if they ran away when challenged' (*The Times*, August 3, 1953) do not convey the impression that African lives are respected. The evidence points to genocide.

What is perhaps most significant about the allegations made against Mau Mau by the Government is the fact that when in September the Government introduced more aggressive measures against Africans in Nairobi, the African replied by boycotting buses and motor vehicles and boycotting smoking in public. While *The Times* states that the boycott was observed by 'the city's entire African population' no attempt has been made to call all Africans in Nairobi Mau Mau.

Under the smokescreen of Mau Mau the British Government sent its troops and armed cars. The screen is no more, and the exposure enables the British people to take effective action to see that the Government is called to a halt. The wealth of evidence that accumulates around the charge of genocide can no longer be ignored. The responsibility to see that the evidence is marshalled and the charge answered at Westminster rests on the British people. The National Day of Protest organised by the Kenya Committee (of which I am a member) on December 9 brought the matter clearly before Members of Parliament, the Colonial Secretary and the Government on that day. It is vital that the Labour Party, the Trade Unions and the whole progressive movement in Britain raises a protest that compares in size only with Britain's shame.

BIAS IN POLITICAL ECONOMY

RONALD L. MEEK

THE present crisis in bourgeois economics in this country has had at least one healthy result—it has stimulated the study of the work of the British Classical economists. Not so long ago, one often used to hear economists expressing the view that ‘it’s no use studying the mistakes of the past’. But the period of self-conceit and complacency is now coming to an end. ‘I do not think’, says Professor Robbins in the interesting book now under review*, ‘that, even in the purely analytical field, our knowledge is so far advanced as to justify us in writing off as superseded the propositions of all but our immediate contemporaries; and, in the applied field, I do not think that we can hope to understand the problems and policies of our own day if we do not know the problems and policies out of which they grew’ (p.1). The moderation of this statement should not mislead us. In the context of present-day academic economics it is the expression of a very real disquiet.

There is a special reason why Professor Robbins is interested in Classical political economy—a reason which comes out clearly in a statement which he makes about John Stuart Mill. In Mill’s later work, says Professor Robbins, there is an ‘underlying anxiety’: ‘will the democratic society of the future have restraint enough to preserve the sacred liberty of the human spirit, and wisdom and self-control enough to ensure its own progress and stability?’ This, Professor Robbins adds, is ‘a momentous question to which, as yet, time has not given a convincing answer’ (p.205). Put in a less sophisticated and more brutal form, this ‘momentous question’ really reduces to another: ‘will capitalist society be able to preserve the sacred essentials of free enterprise, while at the same time interfering with free enterprise sufficiently to stop that system from running on to the rocks?’ This is a question with which Professor Robbins has shown himself to be very concerned. And it is in relation to this question that he now seeks enlightenment from the Classical economists, who believed wholeheartedly in the essential desirability of free enterprise, but who at the same time believed that a certain (very limited) measure of interference with it might on occasion be justified.

*The Theory of Economic Policy in English Classical Political Economy, by Lionel Robbins. Macmillan. 15s.

Who, then, according to Professor Robbins, were the 'Classical economists'? 'By the English Classical Economists', he writes, 'I mean the two great Scotch philosophers, David Hume and Adam Smith, and their followers . . .—conspicuously, Ricardo, Malthus, Torrens, Senior, McCulloch and the two Mills. I include also Jeremy Bentham . . . and I shall not refrain from quoting Cairnes' (p.2). These men do not, of course constitute 'in every respect a homogeneous group'; but 'on the broader issues, they undoubtedly held certain principles in common: they would have subscribed to the central thesis of the *Wealth of Nations* against Mercantilism; they believed in property and free enterprise; the main drift of the *Essay on Population* was accepted by most of them' (p.3).

It would be pedantic to object to Professor Robbins's definition simply because it is different from Marx's. What must be strongly objected to, however, is Professor Robbins's failure to make the important distinction which Marx noted between the work of the earlier economists up to and including Ricardo on the one hand, and that of the post-Ricardian economists on the other. Among the post-Ricardian economists named by Professor Robbins, broadly speaking, there was a very definite decline from that profundity and scientific impartiality which had marked the work of most of their predecessors. It is perfectly true that all the writers with whom Professor Robbins deals 'believed in property and free enterprise'. But there was a very considerable difference between the general political and economic attitudes of the earlier writers, who were seeking to extend free enterprise in the face of mercantilist restrictions and the delaying tactics of the landlord class, and those of the later writers, who were seeking to defend it against the attacks of the rising working class—attacks which were beginning to threaten the very existence of the system itself. The first group was able to maintain a far greater degree of objectivity in its analysis of capitalist society than the second group. It is true, of course, that there were notable exceptions in each group; but to abstract almost completely from the difference between the two groups, as Professor Robbins quite happily does, seems to me to be simply cutting oneself off from all possibility of properly understanding the work of either of them.

The main task which Professor Robbins sets himself is to defend the Classical economists (as so defined) from the charges of 'class bias' and belief in a 'harmony of class interests' allegedly brought against them by certain critics. Professor Robbins, although he

frequently abuses these critics in an almost unacademic manner, displays a curious reluctance to identify them; but it is fairly clear that he means to include 'the Marxians' (and others who have had 'too much Hegel' when they were young—p.84) in his denunciation. 'In the works, both of the Marxians and of members of the German Historical School, it is not unusual to encounter the suggestion that the scientific basis of the Classical theory was just a facade', writes Professor Robbins (p.172). This is a strange accusation, at least so far as 'the Marxians' are concerned: surely it is precisely 'the Marxians' who have been foremost in recent times in emphasising the scientific character of the basis of Classical theory which Smith and Ricardo laid. But Professor Robbins is in need of an Aunt Sally at which to shy certain bricks which he has prepared, and since it is really the bricks which are important we can perhaps let this point pass.

The bricks which he throws at his Aunt Sally, in defence of the Classical economists, are many and various. He states, for example, that in actual fact 'vigilance *against* class interest was characteristic of this group of men' to a considerable degree (p.22, my italics). This statement is true, in a certain sense, of the earlier group of writers. When Ricardo said that he would greatly regret that 'considerations for any particular class' should be 'allowed to check the progress of the wealth and population of the country', he was being perfectly sincere. His concern with the level of profits was due simply to his belief (correct enough for his time) that profits were the main source of capital accumulation, and that capital accumulation was the key to abundance. But Professor Robbins's statement is very much less true of most of the later group of writers: here, as elsewhere in the book, Professor Robbins uses the *dicta* of the more progressive economists to cover up the sins of the more reactionary ones. Then again, Professor Robbins maintains that 'Classical analysis abounds in pessimistic vistas and revelations of clashes of interest' (p.26)—which once more is true up to a point of the earlier group but much less true of the later, and which in any event 'could be equally taken to demonstrate that the primary choice of attitude was sufficiently firmly held to outweigh these considerations'.* Again, he collects together several statements from his economists on the functions of the state; claims that these were in effect positive prescriptions for the construction and maintenance of an artificial 'framework' within which alone

*S. G. Checkland, *Economica*, February 1953, p.66.

free enterprise would work properly; and then implies (quite wrongly, I believe) that the economists were just as much concerned with this framework as they were with what went on inside it. Here Professor Robbins's quotations become much too selective, and sometimes his anxiety to acquit the Classical economists of the charge of advocating extreme *laissez-faire* leads him almost into absurdity.†

In his chapter on 'The Condition of the People', Professor Robbins argues that the Classical economists were not at all hostile to the interests of the working class, as is sometimes alleged; that they did not 'defend subsistence wages', but on the contrary were anxious above all to improve the living conditions of the workers, so far as this was possible within the existing system. Professor Robbins endeavours to show that the Classical economists were much more favourably inclined towards measures to improve health, education, factory conditions, etc., than they are sometimes made out to have been. Indeed, at the end of this chapter some readers may be left wondering how the leaders of the British working-class movement at the time, who were hardly unintelligent people, could possibly have regarded the economists (and Malthus in particular) as their enemies. But Professor Robbins is rather hard put to it to defend the attitude of some of the later economists towards the trade unions; and his treatment of the Malthusian theory of population is, to say the least, highly unsatisfactory. By exaggerating the importance of the introduction in the second edition of Malthus's *Essay* of the new check of 'moral restraint', and by greatly over-estimating the extent to which the economists actually sought to persuade the workers to practise it, Professor Robbins manages to present the theory of population as a great instrument of reform! He is on safer ground in suggesting that when the economists advocated measures of which the working class disapproved (e.g., the abolition or 'reform' of the Poor Laws) they usually did so not because they were in any *direct* sense 'tools or lacqueys of capitalist exploiters' (p.5), but rather because the economic theories which they held led them logically to this position.

Here we come close to the hub of the problem of bias in political economy. Professor Robbins takes great pains to assure us that the Classical economists were not consciously and deliberately apologetic. But this, surely, we knew already. Even Malthus, probably

†See, for example, footnote 1 on p.47.

the most reactionary of them all, was no doubt a good husband and father and as intelligent and honest as most of us. But Malthus nevertheless managed to convince himself of the truth of certain incorrect economic theories which led logically to reactionary political conclusions. What was the source of his bias? By what mysterious alchemy were the interests of reactionary classes transmuted in Malthus's mind into the appropriate economic theories?

Professor Robbins side-steps this vital problem. He contents himself with asserting that in the work of the Classical economists there is 'the texture and the substance of genuine scientific inquiry'. 'If it were otherwise', he adds, '*—and if it were, we, as well as they, would be involved*—the deception was very deep down, far below the level at which the introspective eye can discover self-deception' (p.174, my italics). Surely it is exactly the case where 'the deception is very deep down' that ought to interest us, for the simple reason that it is the commonest case. If reactionary economists were always *consciously* reactionary, the task of analysing their work would be a very easy one. Those who are not afraid to face the consequences of the fact that 'we, as well as they, are involved' must surely work to uncover the hidden causes of bias in political economy. Why are competent and honest economists so often able to prove what they want to prove?

There is no simple or single answer to this question. The forces operating on the mind of a Ricardo to make him accept, say, the Malthusian theory of population are obviously very subtle and 'deep down', and probably different in order from those operating on the mind of a Senior or a McCulloch. But the necessary starting point, in a difficult case like that of Ricardo, seems to be to emphasise the fact that although these forces did not prevent Ricardo from noting (for example) the existence of real conflicts of interest between social classes, they *did* prevent him from visualising certain other unpleasant phenomena associated with the system *as arising from the nature of the system itself*. Ricardo was well aware of the existence of widespread poverty and pauperism in Britain, but he tended to explain it in terms of the theory of population—i.e., in terms of a factor lying outside the system itself. Again, he was well aware of the fact that the rate of profit—the very mainspring of the system—tended to decline through time, but he tried to explain this in terms of the law of diminishing returns in agriculture—i.e., once again in terms of a factor lying outside the system itself. This willingness to be lured away from a study of the inherent contradic-

tions of the system was perhaps the only chink in the armour of Ricardo's scientific integrity—but it was a chink through which political prejudices occasionally managed to penetrate. In the case of Malthus and most of the later economists, this chink was very much larger, and political prejudices penetrated more freely. It was precisely the failure of the Classical economists to criticise the assumption of private property with which they started which Marx and Engels singled out for attack at the very beginning of their economic researches, and which led them to their own point of departure. It seems, then, that 'too much Hegel when one is young' may not be such a bad thing after all. Professor Robbins, to whom this way of looking at the matter seems to be *terra incognita*, could certainly have done with a little more of it.

Book Review

CZECHOSLOVAKIAN SCHOLAR

Ancient History of Western Asia, India and Crete, by Bedřich Hrozný. (Artia, Prague; Collet's, London. 260 pp., 9 plates, 144 text figures, 2 folding maps. 32s. 6d.)

A GENERATION ago there was still a great gap in our knowledge of the growth of civilisation in the ancient near east—the history of Asia Minor was virtually a blank. The man who filled that gap and opened up a whole new branch of history by his decipherment and publication, first of the cuneiform Hittite, then of the hieroglyphic Hittite texts, was Bedřich Hrozný, orientalist, Czechoslovak patriot, and friend of the Soviet Union. His name will stand for ever beside those of Champollion, who first read Egyptian, and Rawlinson, the earliest decipherer of Babylonian. In later years he turned to the unsolved problems of the 'proto-Indian' script of the great Indus valley civilisation discovered by Marshall and others, and of the

writing of Minoan Crete. Though the solutions which he propounded to these are generally regarded as brilliant near misses, his work was of undoubted value.

Dismissed by the Nazis from his chair after the occupation of his country, Hrozný spent those grim years writing a history of civilisation in the near east from the beginnings to about 1,000 B.C., in which he summed up the views to which his life's work had led him. It is the second edition of this work which is now published in an English translation as a posthumous tribute to one of Czechoslovakia's greatest sons.

What Hrozný has given us is really three books in one: a summary of the complex political history of the ancient near east, an introduction to his own work on the proto-Indian and Minoan scripts, and a sketch—much of it avowedly provisional—of the great movements of peoples which underlay the development of civilisation. The cradle of civilisation he places somewhere in central Asia. From there two great waves, or rather series of waves, of invaders

carried it to the fertile river-valleys of the near east, where it grew and flourished. The first, which comprised the forebears of the Sumerians, Semitic peoples, Kassites, Elamites, and others, came mainly by the route south of the Caspian Sea; the second, including the Indo-European speaking peoples, came through the Caucasus, and spread as far as Crete in the west and the Indus valley in the east.

Hrozný was not a Marxist. For all his interest in the forces of production—he did work of fundamental importance on agriculture in ancient times—he was curiously blind to the relations into which men enter in the course of production. So we hear too little of the economic and social structure of the ancient societies. Slaves are casually mentioned here and there. The strange threefold division of early Babylonian society—free, half-free, and slave—is passed over without

discussion. Babylonian and Hittite societies are loosely called 'feudal', and an elaborate parallel is drawn between Babylonian temple economy and that of the mediaeval European monastery. As a result, there is no real internal dynamic of history for Hrozný. Hypotheses of external invasion are too readily used to explain change. And the invaders arrive with the whole of their future history in embryo within them: the Hittites, for instance, were 'obviously a nation destined to rule'.

These weaknesses Hrozný shares with many others. His greatness is his own. Every page has some penetrating, fruitful suggestions; every chapter stimulates the reader to re-examine the evidence. Paper, printing, illustration and binding are superb. The very occasional lapses of the English make one realise how good the rest is.

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